The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. XI. BOSTON, JANUARY, 1903. No. 8

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. H. ELLIS CO., PRINTERS, 272 CONGRESS ST., BOSTON.

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ANOTHER YEAR.

That this shall be a better year
Than any past away,
I dare not at its open door
To wish or hope or pray.

Not that the years already gone
Were wearisome and lone;
That so, with hope too long deferred,
My heart has timid grown.

Nay, rather that they all have been
So sweet to me, and good,
That, if for better I should ask,
'Twould seem ingratitude.

And so with things far off and strange
I do not care to cope,
But look in Memory's face and learn
What largess I may hope.

Another year of setting suns,
Of stars by night revealed,
Of springing grass, of tender buds
By winter's snow concealed.

Another year of Summer's glow,
Of Autumn's gold and brown,
Of waving fields, and ruddy fruit
The branches weighing down.

Another year of happy work,
That better is than play;
Of simple cares and love that grow
More sweet from day to day.

Another year of baby mirth
And childhood's blessed ways,
Of thinker's thought and prophet's dream
And poet's tender lays.

Another year at Beauty's feast,
At every moment spread,
Of silent hours when grow distinct
The voices of the dead.

Another year to follow hard
Where better souls have trod;
Another year of life's delight,
Another year of God.

—*J. W. Chadwick.*

WHAT IS LIFE?

What is life? and what do we mean by seeing life? For all practical purposes, we may say that life is the conscious exercise of faculty; and all such exercise brings joy. We have various kinds of life. Each of us is a hierarchy. We are built in tiers or stories. There is the animal life, the intellectual life, the spiritual life; and there is, or should be, a subordination of the first to the second, and the second to the third.

Now the animal life is thoroughly respectable in its place and order; and the connection of its welfare with that of the superior kinds of life is so close that it may in no wise be despised. The animal life has its rights; and, if they are not respected, the life in the stratum above will suffer. The superior nature is built on the inferior.

In athletic sports and noble games—such, for instance, as our national game of cricket—there is but very moderate danger of exuberant indulgence. But in other directions the bodily appetites must be very sternly reined in, or they will "bolt" with body and soul along the highway to ruin. It is a familiar truth that self-repression and self-control are necessary, even to the good estate of the animal life itself. It is common knowledge among us that many of the

fearful maladies of our day are due to intemperance, as much in eating as in drinking.

The special peril of young men lies in their forgetfulness of the inferior quality of the animal life, and in their laying upon it a stress it cannot bear, requiring services of perpetual delight it cannot render, until it fails and perishes in the attempt.

It is piteous to read the lamentations, to witness the tears, and listen to the rending sighs of poets of the flesh who are losing the zest of fleshly pleasure as age chills their blood. The bright colors of their life are fading, its relish is dulled, the rapture is passing into insipidity, the fragrance is evaporating, and age is arresting manhood. Oh, the weeping and wailing! Toll the knell over their buried youth!

What is the explanation of all this tearfulness and dejection? It is found in this: that an immortal, eternal soul has striven to satisfy itself with the fare provided by the activities and pleasures of the bodily life. Think of a party of cultivated men being invited to an entertainment of marbles and peg-tops and kites! The animal life is a restricted, limited, transient life. It is like thin ice: skate over it quickly, you find it safe and enjoyable; gather upon it in a stationary crowd, it breaks, and you are soused in a bath of ice-cold disappointment.

Do not blame the body for its natural inabilities, do not fret over the joys of youth because they pass away. Youth is but the avenue and staircase of life up which we are to mount to something nobler. Rightly used, in temperate self-control, youth may be like Jacob's ladder, or, rather, flight of steps, and its delights like the angels going up and down; but you may not build a house on the steps, and the angels will look sourly upon you if you try to abide there. You must go forward and upward, or be hurled to the bottom, and lie there bruised and dirty, among the disconsolate poets of the flesh.

Above the animal life is the intellectual; and we breathe a rarer, purer air in these regions.

There is a whiff of immortality in the breeze, a celestial ozone. When young men change to elderly and then to old, the fire decays on the hearth of the animal life, and your fleshly poet cowers, whimpering, over the embers; but no such bereavement of joy chills the glow of the active mind. Under white hair and wrinkled cheeks, with their fixed color and crow's feet, and spectacled eyes, the sacred fire of intellectual rapture and enthusiasm may be seen burning with steady flame, independent and defiant of age. Kepler's fury of delight at the verification of the latest of his discovered laws of the solar system sprang up in an old and worn and wearied frame.

But above the highest peak of mental attainment soars the highest life of all, the life of the spirit,—the element in our nature that looks out upon God, not as power and wisdom, but as holiness, righteousness, and love. Super-terrestrial conditions environ the happy soul that knows this life. It rises to meet the Lord in the air. "It lays hold on eternal life," not in a perplexing conception of a mere endless duration, which fatigues the imagination, but in a perception of deathless quality, a glory symbolized by the diamond and other gems. Here we find ourselves in a realm of imperishable realities, of faculties that know no exhaustion or decay, a ceaseless, tireless activity to which God's own word vouchsafes the name of life.

What the world calls "seeing life" is generally little more than witnessing and sharing bodily activities, the exercises of the first and lowest grade of our threefold life. Often, alas! it is a mere misnomer; and the experience thus labelled should rather be called "seeing death." It is a participation in a sorry spectacle, the absorption of soul by body, and the conflagration of the spirit in the passions of the flesh.

In the second grade, the intellectual, we "see life," indeed. We touch the skirts of God's garment. We have thrills of delight as we see his laws, his harmonies, his beauty and order, the architectural glory of creation.

But in the highest grade of life we find truths beyond the power of words to contain or express. The "knowledge of God" is a guest of the soul, which necessarily enters in through "Eye-gate" and "Ear-gate," like humbler visitors. But, once within us, it soon reveals its infinite nature. It steps upon the threshold of books, lifts the latch of a printed page; but, having obtained en-

trance into our house of clay, it works marvellously. Our cottage walls retreat to the horizon; the ceiling becomes the sky, with stars and solemn hints of distant universes expressed by scarcely visible films; we find ourselves in the presence of an overwhelming but still a calm and sweet mystery, the "knowledge of God." Then, indeed, in the highest sense, we begin to "see life." "This is life eternal, that we know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hath sent."

Dante wrestles with language in an effort to set forth this mystery in the last canto of the "Paradise":—

"Beckoning smiled the sage,
That I should look aloft; but, ere he bade,
Already of myself aloft I looked;
For visual strength, refining more and more,
Bore me into the ray authentical
Of sovran light. Thenceforward what I saw
Was not for words to speak, nor memory's self
To stand against such outrage on his skill.
As one from a dream awakened straight
All he hath seen forgets, yet still retains
Impression of the feeling in his dream,
E'en such am I. For all the vision dies
As 'twere away; and yet the sense of sweet
That sprang from it still trickles in my heart.

. . . . . .

"O eternal beam,
Yield me again some little particle
Of what thou then appeared'st; give my tongue
Power to leave but one sparkle of thy glory
Unto the race to come."

And then the poet tries to describe how, in his vision, he passed onward, leaving all created things behind, into the mystery of the divine nature, sustained by the very keenness of the living ray, till, at last, not only was he bereaved of language, but his spirit sank in the intolerable joy:—

"Then vigor failed the towering phantasy;
But yet the will rolled onward, like a wheel
In even motion, by the love impelled
That moves the sun in heaven, and all the stars."

Those who behold that vision of "things that eye hath not seen, nor heart of man conceived," do, indeed, "see life."—*Selected.*

Diogenes said that no labor was good, unless the end (purpose) of it was courage and strength of the soul, but not of the body.—*Epictetus.*

THE STILL HOUR.

Help me, O God, this year to crown with beauty;
Within my thoughts to write thine own best will.
To thee anew I give myself for duty;
Take me, dear Lord, and all thy plans fulfil!
This new year make a year of holy living,—
Of joyous deeds in proof of love I owe;
Breathe on my soul a spirit meek, forgiving;
Help me, like thee, to share my brother's woe.

—*V. M. Hardy.*

PRAYER FOR NEW YEAR'S MORNING.

On the morning of another year, we bow ourselves before thee, O thou God of our lives, and seek thy blessing. In thy presence, which we now solemnly invoke, we consecrate ourselves renewedly to thy service. May the coming year prove a new year, indeed, bringing new thoughts and better resolutions than we have ever yet formed. Happy, thrice happy, will it be for us if it lead us into a new and divine life. Should it bring us trials and sorrows, and take from us health and friends, still happy will it be if through thy grace we are enabled to use it well. Although it should strip us of our dearest earthly possessions, it will make us rich, indeed, if it give us wisdom and strength; and its memory will be precious forever. Oh, then, with one mind and heart, we would pause on this occasion and pray for light, and beseech thee to give us new conviction of the priceless worth of a godly and righteous life!

We would renounce the pleasures of sin and sense, and no more be led astray by the hollow promises and gaudy show of life. Merciful Father, help thou our insensibility and unbelief. And now, as another year opens upon us, renew us in the whole temper of our minds. Give us strength here and now to break away from every evil habit, and to set out with another spirit to become new creatures, dead to the terrors and solicitations of the world, alive to God and to truth.

We may not live to see the beginning of another year. O thou Disposer of life and of death, may we be found doing thy work with our faces set heavenward and our whole souls bent upon living wisely and well. Let not this year be marked by broken vows, by a sinful surrender of our

souls to the tyranny of wicked passions, by indolence and deadness of heart. But may it be forever memorable as a year rich in generous purposes and Christian deeds. And, when we are called to stand at thy bar, may this year bear witness to virtuous resolutions carefully kept, to our growth in knowledge, in piety, and in love. And may every coming year, every coming day, bear the same blessed testimony. By the divine power of a true spirit may we convert all the changes of life — abundance and want, sickness and health — into opportunities of grace; and so may we be raised above the power of time, and breathe the air of an eternal world, even while we sojourn in this vale of shadows. Amen.

—*Furness's Family Prayers.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Chestnut Hill Branch offers music as follows: —

(2 books) Violin Instruction; Piano Studies; Piano Music; Songs.

Address Mrs. A. B. Denny, Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., offers several copies of the Hymn and Tune Book.

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address, Miss Mary A. Vinal, secretary, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge.

Educational.

"Science of Things Familiar"; Sill's "Lessons in English"; Powell's "How to Write"; Payson's "Practical Arithmetic"; Geikie's "Geology"; Hill's "Rhetoric"; Avery's "School Physics"; "Pronouncing Handbook"; Harvey's "Fourth Reader"; Powell's "Ancient Greece"; Odes of Horace (in English); Allen's "Short History of the Roman People"; Davis's "Third Reading Book"; Metcalf's "English Grammar"; "Story of the Aeneid"; Buckley's "Fairyland of Science"; Creighton's "History of Rome"; "The Era of the Protestant Reformation," Seebohm; "Primer of English Literature," S. A. Brooke; "Normal Music Course, First Reader"; Fyffe's "History of Greece."

Magazines.

Mariners' Advocate, 1901–02; *Modern Priscilla;* musical magazine.

Juvenile.

"Cousin Lucy in the Mountains," "Christchild, and Other Stories," Jacob Abbott; "Lily's Hard Words"; "The Tamed and the Untamed, and Other Stories"; "Cat and Dog"; "The Island Home"; "Sunshine of Greystone"; "We and the World"; "Six to Sixteen" and "A Flatiron for a Farthing," Mrs. Ewing; "Scenes in Nature"; "Stories from Homes."

The following books are offered by the Cincinnati Branch. Address Miss Winifred Evans, 277 Southern Avenue, Mt. Auburn, Cincinnati, Ohio.

School Books.

"Fourteen Weeks in Physiology," Steele; Huxley and Youmans's "Physiology and Hygiene"; "An Academic Physiology and Hygiene," Brands.

History.

"Campaign Sketches of the War with Mexico," W. S. Henry; "American History," Montgomery; "The Eclectic History of the United States"; "A Short History of the Roman People," Allen; Anderson's "Grammar School History of the United States"; "English History for American Readers," Thomas Wentworth Higginson; Anderson's "History of England"; "History of the World," John D. Quackenbos.

Green's "New Practical Arithmetic"; Ray's "Elementary Arithmetic"; Ray's "New Elementary Arithmetic"; Ray's "Test Examples in Arithmetic"; White's "First Book in Arithmetic"; the Franklin "Written Arithmetic," "Elementary Arithmetic"; "Arithmetical Problems, Oral and Written," Daniel W. Fish, A.M.; Hobbs's "Academic Arithmetic"; Dubbs's "Arithmetical Problems"; "New University Arithmetic," Charles Davies, LL.D.; "The New Arithmetic by 300 Authors."

Algebra.

Ray's "New Higher Algebra"; "Answers to Ray's Test Problems in Algebra"; "First Steps in Algebra," Wentworth; "Elementary Algebra"; "Elementary Algebra," Sherwin; "New Elementary Algebra," Greenleaf.

Meservey's "Book-keeping, Single Entry."

Readers.

McGuffey's "Eclectic Primer," "Alternate Sixth Reader," "Eclectic Sixth Reader," "High School Reader"; Monroe's "New First, Fifth, and Sixth Readers"; C. C. Long's "New Language Exercises"; "Practical Lessons in the Use of English," Mary F. Hyde (first and second vols.); "Essentials of English Grammar," W. D. Whitney "English Grammar," B. C. Metcalf; "A School Manual of English Composition," Swinton; McGuffey's "Rhetorical Guide"; Hepburn's "Manual of Rhetoric"; "Golden Book of Choice Reading," by Swinton and Cathcart.

Geography.

"Our World," Mary L. Hall; "A Commercial Geography," Tilden.

Six vols. of Channing; "Philip Nolan's Friends," "Memoir of Mary L. Ware," E. E. Hale; "American Girls' Handy Book," one of amusement and all kinds of work.

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

I should be very glad to get almost any reading matter you could send me, except the *Ladies' Home Journal*, as we live in the country, and have very little to read, and during the long winter months reading is about the only amusement we have. Miss Mattie Cowles, Yadkin Valley, Caldwell County, North Carolina.

I want to thank you for the reading matter sent me through the Cheerful Letter friends. I certainly will appreciate anything you will send me. I would be glad of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. I would be glad if some of the kind friends would send reading to Remus Palmer, and Leon Stevens, Petra, Caldwell County, North Carolina. Leon is an orphan, and lives with his aunt. Remus is a cripple. I know they will appreciate anything you will send them. Mrs.

T. A. Greer, Petra, Caldwell County, North Carolina.

The request for *The Cheerful Letter* in the November number by Mrs. George N. Lawrence has been filled.

Mary L. Kerr, St. John, New Brunswick, an invalid living with her mother who is badly crippled with rheumatism, asks for *Everybody's Magazine* and some book on diet for the sick.

Mrs. Laura J. Smith, Olive Branch, North Carolina, asks for "Success with Flowers."

Mrs. Jennie L. Pleasants sends thanks to those who have sent her reading, and will be thankful for any that may be sent her during the winter.

Mrs. J. M. Kendrick, Taylorsburg, Virginia, will be glad of any reading.

Dear Cheerful Friends,—After thanking you for your kindness in the past, and asking you to continue the same now that I am crippled and need your cheer so much, I want to ask if you will send reading to my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Ross, aged eighty-four and seventy-five years. Their address is Dodson, Virginia. They live two miles from the post-office, three miles from their church, and eighteen miles from any town or railroad, have no near neighbors, and both like to read, and will appreciate books, magazines, or papers. Mrs. H. C. Martin, Vinton, Virginia.

I am fifteen years old, and live in the country. My mother is a widow, and we enjoy reading so much. Will you kindly send me something? Any paper, book, or magazine, I assure you, will be highly appreciated, as I am not able to buy such literature as I would like. Will pass them on to others. Carrie Shelton, Stella, Virginia.

Mrs. C. O. Phillips, Pleasant View, Virginia, ask for Hyde's "English Grammar," Fiske's "Civil Government," and a dictionary.

John B. Moose, Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina, will be glad of any reading.

Mrs. S. C. Moore, Macon, Georgia, asks for Longfellow's "Poems" and "The Vision of Sir Launfal," Lowell.

Arthur Carter, Belcherville, Texas, asks for *Youth's Companion.*

I would be glad to receive any good reading matter, *Review of Reviews*, religious books or papers. J. F. Davis, No. 70 Louise Mill, Charlotte, North Carolina.

I am a little girl thirteen years of age. I would be thankful for some books for myself and little brother and sister. I would like to have "Bread upon the Waters" and "Minnie's Pet Monkey" and "Drawing for Young Children." I would like so much to have "Heavenly Blessedness" and "Lessons on the Life of Christ," for children. Daisy Wheless, Ansonville, Anson County, North Carolina.

Miss Virginia A. Taylor, Gidsville, Virginia, will be glad of reading, and will pass on to others.

Julia Hill, Honey, North Carolina, a young motherless girl, asks for reading.

I will now thank the kind friends who have sent me reading. "The Hardy Norseman" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and story book for the children were appreciated very much. I read them, and pass on to others. Would be glad to get "Jane Eyre," Baldwin's "Third Reader," and arithmetic for a child, and any other good books or magazines to make the long winter evenings seem less dreary. Some kind friends send me *The Cheerful Letter.* I like to read it so much. Will some of the Cheerful Letter friends correspond with me? Mrs. Mary McFarland, Roosevelt, Oklahoma.

I am a farmer's daughter and spend many lonely hours. Any reading matter will be thankfully received, especially religious books. I particularly desire "The Imitation of Christ." Will be glad to receive reading matter suitable for my niece, age fourteen years. (Miss) Meta G. Hunt, Bobbitt, Vance County, North Carolina.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Miss Bessie Watts, to Mrs. W. W. Ware, 1114 Clay Street, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Eva Beach, from Flora Vista to Durango, Colorado.

Mrs. J. Loveday, from Kenwood Road to 71 Yates Street, Albany, New York.

Mrs. Clarice Berry, from South McAlester to Haileyville, Indian Territory.

W. A. Gatlin Foster, from Summerfield, North Carolina, to Westminster, North Carolina.

Mrs. D. W. Kallam, from Dillard, North Carolina, to Wamadot, North Carolina.

Mrs. Cora Turbyfill, from Linden to Econtuchka, Indian Territory.

Mrs. A. J. McQueen, from Alfordsville to Rowland, North Carolina, R. F. D. No. 1.

J. F. Davis, from Albemarle, North Carolina, to No. 70 Louise Mill, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Mrs. Rena Gamage, from Houston, Texas, to Macomb, McDonough County, Illinois.

Mrs. F. E. Briggs, from 748 First Street, Portland, Oregon, to 626 Hood Street, Portland, Oregon.

Rev. C. F. Dykeman, from Ashton, Minnesota, to Dakota, Winona County, Minnesota.

Mrs. Belle Jordan, from Cherry Valley to Vanndale, Arkansas.

THE MOTHER'S COUNCIL.

A DRAWING SCHOOL.

Mary resolved to have the number of her scholars small and limited, and also to fix the number of lessons which she would have in her first term.

If the children begin with a course of *four* drawing-lessons, for example,—no more and no less,—they carry that idea in their mind as they go along, and feel that they are doing something that has a definite ending, and that not too far off. And, as they approach toward the end, they feel as if they were accomplishing an undertaking, and are pleased with the idea of doing one complete thing.

It is very easy, if the plan works well, to begin a second course after the first is finished: whereas, if it does not work well, if the teacher gets tired or the children get tired, or if unexpected difficulties occur, then the plan comes to an end of itself. The work undertaken is finished according to the original plan, and does not appear like an attempt and a failure, as it would have done if it had been begun with the idea of being carried on a long time, and then had been abandoned after a few lessons.

Mary determined to have the number of her scholars limited to five, two for each side of the table and one for the end. The other end of the table she reserved for herself.

Mary had a very pretty silk flag a little more than a foot long, which she determined to use in her school, as a signal for silence and attention.

At length, after all the children had come and had all had a little time to play, Mary rang the bell for the school to begin; and they immediately all ran to their places and climbed up into their seats.

"What a good thing it was," said Mary to herself, "that I chose their places for them, and marked them all myself! If I had left it to them, they would have all wanted the same seats; and there would have been nothing but scrambling and confusion."

"Now, children," said Mary, "I am going to make a speech; and you must all be still, and listen to my speech.

"I have given you each a picture, with something in it to copy. I shall come round and show you each, in turn, what part it is that you are going to copy.

"When you are ready to begin drawing, I shall ring the bell and put the flag up. Then, as long as it stays up, nobody must speak a word. If anybody wishes to speak either to me or to anybody else, she must first go and ring the bell a little, just one touch, and put the flag down, and say, *Flag down!* See! I will show you how.

"And now," she went on to say, "sometimes you will speak when the flag is up, and so break the rules. You will forget, perhaps, that it is up, or you will be careless and not pay attention. So we must have some punishment. A rule without a punishment for breaking it is nothing at all. Now what shall I do to you if you speak when the flag is up?"

"Send us home," said one of the children.

"Oh, that would be too severe a punishment," said Mary, "for such a little thing. Besides, that would be punishing me as well as you, for I should lose one of my scholars."

"Tie our hands behind us," said another

girl, "and make us go and stand up in the corner."

"That would be too severe, too," said Mary. "But I will tell you what the punishment shall be. Whoever speaks when the flag is up must go out into the middle of the floor, and stand on one foot and count ten. Whenever Sarah hears any one speak, she must immediately put the flag down, and keep it down till the punishment is over."

The children laughed, and were all ready to agree to such a punishment as that. Indeed, the fact that it would be amusing at first was a great advantage, as that would make it all the easier to get it fairly and fully introduced as the certain consequence of breaking the rule.

The reader may be somewhat surprised that Mary should have adopted the plan of allowing the scholars themselves to put down the flag whenever they chose to do so. It would have been better, some persons might think, to have had the flag near Mary, and under her sole control, so that *she* could put it down at regular intervals, as often as she thought it necessary for them to speak to her.

This would be the best plan in the end, no doubt; but for the beginning, and as a means of accustoming her scholars to observe perfect silence and to give their whole attention to their drawing while the flag was up, her method was best.

If she had taken charge of the flag herself, and had then put it up for a certain time, say a quarter of an hour, and, as soon as the children had begun to work, one of them had come suddenly upon some unexpected difficulty, she — that is, the child — would have been very much perplexed, and would have thought it very hard to have to wait a whole quarter of an hour before she could speak; and she would have looked anxious, and moved restlessly in her seat, and would have endeavored to attract Mary's attention by her looks or her movements, and so have made a great interruption.

It requires considerable preliminary training to prepare young children to sit still and give their attention in silence to some mental employment for a quarter of an hour at a time, and the plan which Mary adopted was an excellent one to furnish the preliminary training.

ESTABLISHING THE LAW.

When all had received their instructions, they went to their seats. Mary directed Sarah to put the flag up. Sarah did so, and then the children began their work. In a minute or two Mary said,—

"If any of you make a wrong mark — There," she added, suddenly checking herself, "I spoke when the flag was up. Put the flag down, Sarah."

Sarah took the flagstaff out of the bottle, and laid it down upon the table.

"When you put the flag down," said Mary, "you must always strike the bell, and say, Flag down! as I told you. Put it up again, and then put it down properly."

So Sarah put the flag up again, and then took it down again, with the proper accompaniments.

"That is right," said Mary.. "Now I can speak. But I spoke before while it was up, and so I must go out into the floor and stand on one foot, and count ten. The rule is the same for me as it is for you "

So Mary left her seat, and went out into the middle of the floor and then, poising herself on one foot, she counted ten, the children all laughing. They thought that such a punishment as that was only fun; and they meant to speak when the flag was up, the very first opportunity, so as to enjoy the pleasure of the punishment.

This was exactly what Mary expected. Indeed, it was a part of her plan.

"They will think it good play for a time," she said to herself; "and I am perfectly willing that they should do so until they get the certainty of the punishment fixed and established. But they will soon get tired of it, and then they will begin to obey the flag."

I suppose it is needless to say that Mary broke the rule in the case mentioned on purpose, in order to give the children an example of the way in which the punishment was to follow, and make them more willing to submit to it good-naturedly, when they should break it themselves.

The operation of the system was exactly what Mary had expected. At first, the children were so fond of taking down the flag and putting it up again that they made a great many frivolous pretences of wishing to speak. Dickey was the first.

He went and put the flag down, only to go to Mary and show her his work, and ask her if he had not drawn the first line pretty well.

The others followed his example, and took the flag down under equally needless pretexts. Mary, however, had the good sense not to make any objection, knowing very well that, as soon as the novelty was over, they would consider it a trouble and not mere fun to get down from their seats and go to the end of the table, and perform all that ceremony, just to say something that was of no consequence whatever.

Pretty soon they did get tired; and then Dickey, wishing for a piece of India-rubber, asked for it without first putting the flag down.

"Flag down!" said Mary, addressing Sarah.

So Sarah put the flag down.

"You spoke when the flag was up," said Mary; "and now you must go out and stand on one foot, and count ten."

"I had just as lief do it as not," said Dickey. And he went out into the middle of the floor, and did it.

"It is not much of a punishment," said Mary; "but if you really forget, and speak without meaning to break the rule, it is not much of a fault, and so it does not deserve a great punishment."

Mary, before the flag was put up again, told Dickey to bring his paper to her, and have the bad line rubbed out. *She* kept the India-rubber, she said; and she was going to do all the rubbing out herself.

This was an excellent plan, too. Young children, when they begin to draw, usually do a great deal of mischief to their work by continually rubbing out or trying to rub out what they have done. By requiring her scholars to come to her whenever anything of that kind was to be done, Mary kept the practice within some reasonable bounds.

The children were quite careless after this for some time about speaking when the flag was up, not considering the punishment of any consequence at all. But Mary insisted upon their going through with it every time any one spoke, even if they spoke only to one another and in the slightest whisper. Before long they began to be tired, both of going to put the flag up and down and also of the penalty which followed if they spoke without doing it; and then the work of drawing began to go on in a very silent and orderly manner.

The rule of the flag seemed to be, in fact, firmly established. But it was not so really yet. No rule of law in any kind of government can be considered as actually established until there has been at least one serious attempt to resist it, and this attempt has been firmly put down by superior power. Mary's authority had to be submitted to this test.—*Jacob Abbott.*

To be continued.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE PERFECT PET,— THE CAT.

The use of the pet as an aid to health has not been considered as it deserves. The companionship of cats and birds in solitary lives has unquestionably kept more people than we suspect out of the insane asylum; and, if friendless men took kindly to them, there would be fewer misers, drunkards, and criminals than there are now. It seems to be the divinely appointed mission of our furred and feathered friends, who never grow gloomy with care, never suffer from envy, ambition, or any of our soul-destroying vices, to make us forget our worries, to inspire us with hope, and hence with health.

Happily, we are learning that the mind has to do with the misdeeds of the body, and that there are no more valuable curative agents than cheerfulness, happiness, and hope. Keep the doctor and the drugs in the background (if you don't quite care to discharge him), abolish sighs and long faces, bring in the pets, and make trial of the cheerful-thought cure.

In this rôle the kitten is inimitable. Nothing can be so droll and at the same time so graceful and altogether charming as the frolics of two or three kittens.

"Poor pussy," we naturally call the cat. Do we know why? Is it not in instinctive recognition of the strange fact that this gentle beast is the most generally misunderstood creature in the world? His reserve, his self-reliance, his inextinguishable love of liberty, have earned for him a name totally unlike his real character.

The old notion that puss is incapable of

friendship and attachment would not be worth attention, did we not see it repeated to this day, and insisted upon as a well-proven fact. The contrary is the truth. The cat is exceedingly fond of his friends, and generous in his conduct to other animals. He is, to be sure, not demonstrative; nor does he kiss the hand that beats him. And as we go about in our blundering way, unless we are made uncomfortable by a show of affection fairly forced upon us, as is done by the dog, we do not notice it, and conclude it does not exist. Puss does not express his emotion by barking, prancing about, and knocking one down; but his quiet rubbing against his friend, his gentle touch of the tongue, mean quite as much as the more noisy greeting.

The cat-mother's kindness to the young of other families is notorious. She will adopt into her family and bring up with all the love and care she lavishes upon her own little ones creatures so incongruous as chickens, ducks, foxes, squirrels, puppies, hedgehogs, and even rats. Moreover, she forms friendships of the warmest sort, not only with dogs and horses, but with turkeys and fowls, readily giving up her warm bed by the fire to share the cold quarters of her friend.

It has been commonly supposed that, because a cat will not learn to do tricks like a dog, he lacks intelligence: whereas the truth is, he is too knowing to be driven to learn. It is now known that, if he chooses, he can learn even more tricks than a dog, and go through them with greater precision, provided he is taught by kindness and coaxing. If struck, he turns sulky: if frightened, he will do nothing.

Nor do we appreciate the usefulness of the cat. In some parts of the world, cats are trained to act as carriers; and then they bring a high price. In Spain they are made free of garrets, where most of the grain is stored. Every attic granary has its small door under the roof for their use. The roofs of the city are given up to them for a promenade, and many of them never come to the ground in their lives. In storehouses, where grain attracts mice, puss is monarch of all he surveys, treated with due honors, supplied with food and drink, and in every way made welcome. If the whole cat race should be annihilated, we, in America, would speedily be brought to appreciate the service we have despised.

The government of the United States maintains quite an army of cats—more than three hundred, it is said—for use in the Post-office Department. The duty of these public servants is to preserve postal matter and mail-bags from rats and mice, which they do most effectually, because they are kept in good condition by proper feeding. Each postmaster in the larger cities is allowed a proper sum—in some cases as much as forty dollars a year—for cats' meat. Before cats were taken into service, great loss was sustained from the teeth of the rodents, who thought nothing of boring through a pile of bags and letters in a single night.—*From "Our Home Pets," by Olive Thorne Miller.*

HABITS OF READING.

(*Continued from November Number.*)

When I own a book, and am reading it carefully, I write, with a pencil, on the last page of it, references to the particular points in it which I think I may need to remember again or to recur to. Then I have my own index ready for me at any future time.

But I have, perhaps, already advised you somewhere not to buy many books. If you are reading in books from a library, never, —as you are a decently well-behaved boy or girl,—never make any sort of mark upon a page which is not your own. All you need then is a little page of paper, folded in where you can use it for a book-mark, on which you can make the same memorandum which you would have made on the fly-leaf, were the book your own. In this case you will keep these memorandum pages together in your scrap-book, so that you can easily find them. And if—as is very likely—you have to refer to the book afterwards in another edition, you will be glad if your first reference has been so precise that you can easily find the place, although the paging is changed. John Locke's rule is this: refer to the page with another reference to the number of pages in the volume. At the same time tell how many volumes there are in the set you use. If you use this rule, you would enter Charles II.'s escape from England, as described in the "Pictorial History of England," thus:

Charles II. escapes after the battle of Worcester.

Pictorial History of England. p. 391/885 Vol. 3./4

You will have but little difficulty in finding your place in any edition of the "Pictorial History" if you have made as careful a reference as this is.

My own pupils, if I may so call the young friends who read with me, will laugh when they see the direction that you go to the original authorities whenever you can do so. For I send them on very hard-working tramps, that they may find the original authorities, and perhaps they think I am a little particular about it.

Of course, it depends a good deal on what your circumstances are whether you can go to the originals. But, if you are near a large library, the sooner you can cultivate the habit of looking in the original writers, the more will you enjoy the study of history, of biography, of geography, or of any other subject. It is stupid enough to learn at school that the Bay of God's Mercy is in north latitude 73°, west longitude 117°. But read Captain McClure's account of the way the "Resolute" ran into the Bay of God's Mercy, and what good reason he had for naming it so, and I think you will never again forget where it is—or look on the words as only the answer to a stupid "map-question."

I was saying very much what I have been writing, last Thursday, to Ella, with whom I had a nice day's sail; and she, who is only too eager about her reading and study, said she did not know where to begin. She felt her ignorance so terribly about every separate thing that she wanted to take hold everywhere.

She had been reading "Lothair," and found she knew nothing about Garibaldi and the battle of Aspremarte. Then she had been talking about the long arctic days, with a traveller; and she found she knew nothing about the arctic regions. She was ashamed to go to a concert and not know the difference between the lives of Mozart and of Mendelssohn.

I had to tell Ella what I have said to you, that we cannot all of us do all things. Far less can we do them all at once. I reminded her of the rule for European travelling, which you may be sure is good,—that it is better to spend three days in one place than one each day in three places. And I told Ella that she must apply the same rule to subjects.

Take these very instances. If she really gets well acquainted with Mendelssohn's life,—feels that she knows him, his habit of writing, and what made him what he was,—she will enjoy every piece of his music she ever hears with ten times the interest it had for her before. But, if she looks him out in a Cyclopedia and forgets him, and looks out Mercadante and forgets him, and finally mixes up Mozart and Mercadante and Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, because all four of their names begin with M, why, she will be—where a great many very nice boys and girls are who go to concerts,—but where as sensible a girl as Ella does not want to be—and where I hope none of you want to be, for whom I am writing.—*Edward Everett Hale.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

I.

Behead a craft, and leave a kind of grain. Behead again, and leave a preposition. Again, and behold a kind of tea.

II.

Birds.

1. A metal, a letter, and a measure.
2. A color and a letter.
3. A time and day, a preposition and a wind storm.
4. To separate and an elevation.
5. A boy's nickname and a preposition.

III.

Charade.

My first we feel in summer.
My second soldiers use.
My third is what a cockney calls my first.
My whole is a savage.

IV.

Enigma.

My first is in glove, but not in hand.
My second in sea, but not in land.
My third is in friends, but not in foes.
My fourth is in bud, but not in rose.
My fifth is in summer, but not in fall.
My sixth is in narrow, but not in small.
My seventh is in arch, but not in tower.
My whole is a favorite garden flower.

V.

Charade.

My first often contains my second, my second often dislikes my first, and, though there is not a possibility of its following, runs away from it. By the account of many, my whole will never be so happy as in its present condition.

Answers to Puzzles in December Number.

I.

1. Ostrich.
2. Hawk.
3. Canary.
4. Sparrow.
5. Gull.
6. Swallow.
7. Dove.

II.

Cross Word Enigma.

Pansy.

III.

Letter Puzzles.

1. Ontario—On-*ta*-rio.
2. Undertones—Under-t-one-s.

IV.

1. Roan.	8. Prone.	15. Grown.
2. Crone.	9. Tone.	16. Bone.
3. Stone.	10. Lone.	17. Shone.
4. Groan.	11. Own.	18. Cone.
5. Moan.	12. None.	19. Strown.
6. Blown.	13. Mown.	20. Flown.
7. Thrown.	14. Zone.	21. Throne.

The friends of Mrs. James Newcomb, San Antonio, Texas, will sympathize with her in the great loss she has sustained, in the death of her only child, a bright, promising boy, on November 24.

The editor regrets that this notice came too late for insertion in the December *Cheerful Letter*.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable. Do not offer odd numbers of periodicals, but send them directly to one of the many stations where they are acceptable.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, February 5, at 25 Beacon Street, at 10.30 A.M. All persons interested are cordially invited.

Please notice the change of address of our secretary, Miss Langmaid, to 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass. All who desire correspondents are reminded to write directly to Miss Langmaid.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE: —

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

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TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden St., Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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